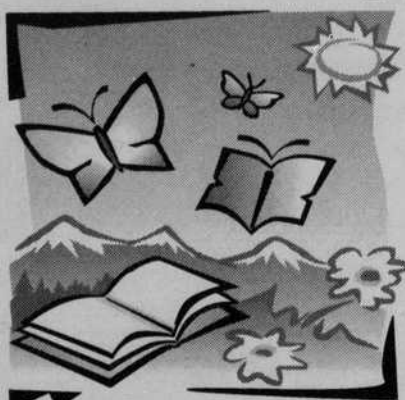


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DELL

continued from page 1

his company in an effort to make computer manufacturers aware of the harm that discarded computers can do to the environment. Dell Computers was singled out because of the company's size and dominant position in the market, according to <http://www.computertakeback.com>.

Wood said Dell deserves recognition for steering his company toward these policy changes. "This is a watershed moment in the effort to promote corporate accountability for waste and a clear indication that organized pressure in the market can positively influence corporations and their management," Wood said.

The University, like Dell, is also taking steps to recycle computers.

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety has been recycling computer parts for almost three years under its Computer Harvest program, pulling in its first "crop" in May 2001. Recently, the program has expanded to include scientific equipment, which often contains hazardous materials such as mercury switches.

University Environmental Manager Nick Williams said the emphasis of the University's program is still on the "de-manufacturing" of used computers and monitors and preventing hazardous materials from entering landfills.

"We've diverted about 10 tons of cathode-ray tube (CRT) glass, two tons of circuit boards, and just miles and miles of wiring from going into landfills," Williams said. "As far as CRT glass is concerned, lead is the culprit. About 50 percent of it is lead and that will typically go into a landfill."

Williams said that without proper disposal, the toxic materials, such as lead, can find their way into the water and air, eventually concentrating themselves in humans.

Williams said it was appropriate that Dell chose to speak with college

and university students.

"We're one of the biggest users of computers here in colleges, so we go through them a lot faster than normal," he said. "It's very timely that people are beginning to care about e-waste. We're just a mid-size college and look at how much we kept from going into the landfills — imagine all the universities in the country."

The web conference — which drew participants from more than 40 locations around the country, according to the GrassRoots Recycling Network — addressed three areas that the Computer TakeBack Campaign, a coalition of environmental groups, had asked Dell's company to improve. The points included the willingness of producers to take back old computers, compliance to cleaner standards when manufacturing computers and responsible recycling of unwanted material.

"We want to make this easy for our customers, and we want to do the right thing. We want to make sure that as we're putting out the tens of millions of products that we're finding a way to take them back and do it in a responsible way," Dell said.

The Computer TakeBack Campaign sent Dell a letter urging him to take a stance on e-waste, the term for waste produced by old unusable computers. Dell replied on April 6 and released an "open letter to college and university students" acknowledging that his company's support could have a potential impact and calling for further discussion.

"Dell has always been driven by direct relationships, and we've found there's no better way to solve a problem or achieve a goal than to communicate openly, honestly and directly," Dell said in the letter. "Due to the large number of Dell customers, a change in how we produce a product can ripple around the world."

Contact the business/science/technology reporter at stevenneuman@dailyemerald.com.

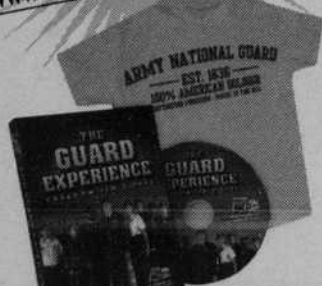
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